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Pakistan

Help us build a credible alternative

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Dear friends,

Help us to put forward a credible alternative to the politics of the rich. An appeal to all friends in social and political circles.

On 10 April 2010, Mian Abdul Qayum, a labour leader in Faisalabad, has submitted his nomination papers as candidate for the Punjab Assembly constituency 63 Faisalabad. The other candidates from this constituency will be from Pakistan Peoples Party, Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz and National Muslim League.

We need your support to contest this bye election.

Who are our opponents?

The seat was declared vacant when one Mian Asif Ajmal resigned after it was clear during a Supreme Court hearing that he has submitted bogus degrees to the election commission in 2008 to prove that he is a graduate. Asif Ajmal is an industrialist and owner of a textile factory. He was arrested by police in 2008 after he and his goons fired on workers of his textile factory when they were demanding wage increase and union rights. One worker was killed and over a dozen seriously injured. He spent nearly one and half month in jail at the time but came out of jail using his political influence among police and courts. He got elected in February 2008 election on a nomination of Pakistan Muslim league Q, he later joined PMLN. Mian Nawaz Sharif has nominated Asif Ajmal to contest this seat. The person who used bogus degrees and deceived his constituency and the election commission is awarded a ticket of PMLN, a party that claim to defend democratic traditions fight for independent judiciary.

Pakistan Peoples Party Punjab president Rana Aftab is once again in the field to contest election after he was defeated in 2008 general elections. He has been member of Punjab Assembly two times earlier. He is rich farmer and an advocate by profession and die hard PPP activist.

Amjad Warraich, a former Member of Parliament and leader of one National Muslim League, a new Muslim League under his leadership, has also announced to contest from this seat. His wife is member of National assembly and his brother is in Punjab Assembly. There is no end of gluttony within this family.

Labour Party Pakistan has decided to contest the bye election of Punjab Assembly constituency PP 63. Mian Abdul Qayum will be its candidate from the seat. He is chairman of Labour Qaumi Movement and a member of LPP Federal Committee. We have decided to contest this election to challenge the hegemony of the big capitalist and feudal parties. We have not much experience of parliamentary politics. The parliamentary elections in Pakistan favour the rich and those with a lot of money. It is constituency based and rich politician spends millions in violation of the election commission laws and no one take notice of that. Despite all this, we have decided to fight back.

Our candidate: Mian Abdul Qayum

Mian Abdul Qayum is a labour leader of textile and power looms workers. He is the founding member of Labour Qaumi Movement, a labour organization that has led many struggles of textile workers in Faisalabad and surrounding

area. Over 10,000 joined when LQM organized a mass workers rally on the eve of the Labour Party Pakistan fifth congress on 29 January 2010 at famous Dhobi Ghat ground of Faisalabad.

Mian Abdul Qayum, himself a textile worker, has been able to organize LQM in every area of Faisalabad because of its militant actions and solidarity expression with other movements. At present, he works full time for LQM. Workers of Faisalabad textile sector pay his expenditures. His partner Shamim Qayum is also an activist of LQM and spends time to organize the women workers.

Mian Abdul Qayum has been arrested several times during the last few years during the struggle of the textile workers. He spent 28 days along 24 other power looms workers in Jhang jail when he led a strike that lasted 20 days resulting in a complete victory of power looms workers. Since LQM was established over 10,000 power looms workers have got social security cards. There was none when the LQM was formed in 2003. They have been able to help workers in wage increase, blocked payments were released, new trade unions in several factories formed and in general a labour dignity is been restored.

LQM is an independent labour organization supported by several left political currents and social organization and movements. Most of its leaders are formally members of Labour Party Pakistan. LQM formation is a departure from the traditional trade unions that have been unable to grow during the last decade. It is community based labour organization and not just a work place organization. LQM has combined activism at work place and at community level. It has formalized many informal sector workers. It has revived the real workers tradition of picket lines at work place and at the homes of the bosses.

LQM strategy to press the demands of the workers varies from case to case. It has held hunger strike camps, public rallies, seminars, workshops, Gherao (pickets) of factories, bosses homes, police stations and labour department, demonstrations and many other forms of protests. It has held very militant but peaceful struggle.

Mian Abdul Qayum decision to contest election against the parties of the rich is an important step in promotion of working class politics. It will pave the way for more independent actions of the working class not only in parliamentary field but also outside. After the election of Mai Jhoori in Baluchistan bye election last month, the contest of Mian Abdul Qayum will also be watched closely by many in Pakistan and internationally.

Our election programme

Although this is a Punjab Assembly bye election, we want to contest the election on a revolutionary programme with transitional demands. In a meeting on 9th April 2010 at Labour Qaumi Movement in Faisalabad to discuss the priority of the election campaign, it was decided to take up three issues forcefully. They are price hike, labour rights and load shedding of electricity and gas. One is directly linked with the lives of the workers and the other is linked for the survival of the local power looms industry and infrastructure. There has been a massive price hike because of the conditionality's of the IMF and World Bank loans. We will take up the issue of neo liberal agenda and role of imperialism and multi national companies. We will raise the issue of labour right to form union and fight for workers right to decent life.

Importance of this election

This election is been announced at a time when PPP government is taking very important decisions to implement the

neo liberal agenda. Price hike is out of control. Important public sector institutions are on offer for sale. Infrastructure is collapsing. The load shedding of electricity is for over 12 hours. Most of the power looms are closed because of shortage of electricity and thousands of workers laid off temporarily. The workers are very angry and there is a possibility of a grand black lash against PPP government through this election.

This is an area where workers have gathered in thousands on the call of labour Qaumi Movement for defense of worker rights and better job conditions. PPP Punjab president is in contest. So workers have a choice of making a decision on the policies of PPP.

This is also an election where PPP and PMLN have put up candidate against each other unlike the previous bye elections. PMLN have nominated a person who has been involved in firing cases, forgery of the educational certificates and other criminal activities. Workers may reject the both big parties in this area.

A decent vote or a victory of a textile worker in a bye election can generate a lot of enthusiasm among the working class in Pakistan to go for an alternative choice than that of parties of the capitalists and feudal.

This is the first parliamentary election that LPP is contesting after 2002 general elections. LPP have done a good street work against military dictatorship, for workers rights and peasant's right to own land. The LPP can make a difference in this election if it gets the right support from its friends.

What can you do?

We need your support in different fields. We have not much time left. The election is on 15 May 2010.

- 1- Please help us financially,
- 2- Please take off time to go the constituency. It is called PP 63 and it covers the areas next to Faisalabad airport, Sadhar, Thekiwala, Pansera on Jhang Road. Please come and help in the election campaign to go door to door.
- 3- Please help us in transport. If you have a car, small van or jeep, please lend it to us with a driver for at least a week before the election campaign. We have to cover a long distance area and we need a lot of transportation.
- 4- Please help in printing of literature, posters and leaflets. If you can get it printed, we can provide you the text and designs.
- 5- Please help us in designing banners and help in printing on cloth.
- 6- Please give suggestion in promotion of our election symbol APPLE, the LPP election symbol. We have taken a peaceful sign unlike the PPP and PMLN who have very violent election symbols.
- 7- Please take a day off on 15 May to help on the Election Day.
- 8- Please suggest any other way to help us.

Help us build a credible alternative

Please contact me for any help and I will put you in contact with right persons involved in that area.

Labour Party Pakistan appeals to all its supporters, friends, comrades and members to come forward to help in the campaign of Mian Abdul Qayum.

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